

HAZARD MITIGATION COMMITTEE , August 15, 2024, 8 am, via ZOOM

Attending: Marty Feltus, Chris Thompson, Nate Sicard, Ken Mason, Emily Finnegan, Tracy Bodeo, Ben Copans, Jessica Louisos, Doug Osborne.

Reviewed summary of written comments received so far after July 30 presentation. These will be incorporated with a listing of questions and answers and comments at the July 30 meeting and made public before the next public meeting. The final report from SLR at project end will incorporate these topics.

Participants also reported on comments heard “on the street” from citizens. Opinions were expressed regarding the viability of the 14 alternatives presented July 30. SLR offered two additional mitigation measures (#15, #16) relating to the north Main Street area based on comments from July 30 that favored dredging. #15 related to creating more flood water storage (by excavation of approx.. 100,000 CY) in the ox-bow area downstream of the Sanborn Bridge. #16 related to the combined effect of #15 and #9 already proposed. Modeling confirms that the greatest benefit in reducing flood elevations still comes from removing constrictions in the river flow.

SLR also offered an alternative #13 relating to the Center Street bridge area. In this option, the dry culverts were maximized in size to 6 x 20 (instead of 4 x 8). The actual water level reduction was not great, but if combined with some building buyouts would appreciably increase the flow through the area.

Considerable discussion regarding the rehabilitation of the Sanborn Bridge and proposed adjacent park. Can the bridge be elevated (as proposed) but supported by new abutments that do not encroach on the river? Does the bridge need to be moved to another site completely? Effect of creating the park on the south side, but having commercial development on the north side?

The group received information from Ken Mason regarding the FERC license for the Vail Dam. At the last license date (2004) evaluation of the dam regarding flooding was conducted and the basic conclusion was that removal of the dam would probably not have a significant effect on upstream water elevations due to several complicating factors. SLR commented that engineering analyses of dam removal projects have changed over the years and that it might be valuable to have another study as we get closer to the 2034 relicensure date.

Comments were made regarding the difference between dredging and debris removal. Debris removal is generally considered part of “maintenance” of the river corridor versus longer lasting mitigation measures. It generally falls to the Town to do, but stream management permits are needed from the State.

The group reviewed requirements for the pre-application of the next round of FEMA funding (\$69 million for Vermont). Pre application is due August 30. Time frame of any approval would probably be 12-18 months. Pre-applications would have to be refined to more definitive proposals if selected for

further review. Two of the advantages of this particular round of funding are that no local match is required and any buy out proposals are evaluated on pre-flood values. Alison and Jessica indicated that it would make sense for us to propose two or three different actions as long as they tied together with the same end goal.

The consensus of the group was to concentrate on actions to improve the flow of the flood waters through town while also preserving vehicular access as much as possible and also trying to keep human inhabitants out of harm's way. SLR will review this general framework with the various specific proposals they have developed and propose two or three courses of action. These proposals will be part of the public review at the next meeting.

Emily and Tracy will work with Nicole Gratton to learn more about the current plans for Sanborn Park and pass along to SLR. Marty will check with homeowners along Center Street to gauge willingness to consider a buyout. Marty will also check with owners of Main Street dry culvert property regarding potential changes at that location.

Next public meeting will be Thursday, August 22, 4-6 pm. Location TBD. In person and zoom.

Marty Feltus

08/15/24

